recent reports of nuclear weapons-related links between Pakistan and North Korea.

(b) Pakistan's in involvement with international terrorism and nuclear and missile proliferation is well known to the international community.

(c) Government has consistently drawn the attention of the international community to Pakistan's track record in these areas.

During their meeting on 12 September 2002 in New York, Prime Minister and U.S. President George Bush reaffirmed their commitment to continue the process of qualitatively transforming India-U.S., relations and emphasised, in this context, the deepening of the bilateral dialogue and the strengthening of the new strategic framework of relations. The two Governments have a shared commitment to combat terrorism and prevent proliferation of strategic goods and technology.

Foreign Minister's Dhaka Visit

964. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU):
SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether following the SAARC Minister's meeting in Kathmandu he visited Dhaka (Bangladesh);

(b) if so, the issues discussed for cementing ties with Bangladesh and the agreements reached as a result thereof, especially those for improving trade ties, and rail and road transport between the two countries;

(c) whether both the countries have also decided to reactivate all the Committees and task forces including Joint working Group to give a boost to bilateral relations; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes. Hon'ble Minister for External Affairs visited Bangladesh on 24-25 August 2002.

(b) The visit was part of the ongoing high level interaction between India and Bangladesh and aimed at promoting and further enhancing our bilateral relations. The discussions covered various issues such as lifting

of ban on exports of Indian goods from the land routes, promoting infrastructure linkages, boundary demarcation, expediting pending meetings, identifying ways and means to control cross-border crimes, etc. Starting of Agartala-Dhaka bus service, Agartala-Akhaura rail link was also discussed. In addition, the discussions also focussed on addressing of concerns of Bangladesh over its trade deficit with India. However, no Agreement or MoU was signed during the visit.

(c) and (d) It was agreed to hold the various pending bilateral meetings early including first meeting of Joint Group of Customs Officials and the Joint Working Group.

Extradition of Abu Salem

965. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Abu Salem, one of India's most wanted criminal, was arrested in Lisbon in September, 2002;

(b) if so, whether India has any extradition treaty with Portugal; and

(c) if not, steps taken by Government to arrange deportation of Abu Salem to India and success achieved in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes.

(b) India does not have an Extradition Treaty with Portugal.

(c) Even though India does not have any Extradition Treaty with Portugal, the Portuguese Government has indicated its willingness to consider a request from the Government of India for the extradition of Abu Salem. All necesary steps are being taken by the concerned authorities in the Government of India to expedite matters in regard to the request for extradition of Abu Salem.

Economic Relations with Russia

966. SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps, if any, taken in the recent past to deepen economic